



Saint John of God Housing Association CLG

Tenants

**Comment, Compliment & Complaint
Policy & Procedure**

Approved by Board of Directors



Saint John of God Housing Association CLG

Comment, Compliment & Complaint Policy & Procedure

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Comment, Compliment & Complaint Policy & Procedure

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Saint John of God Housing Association CLG

Comment, Compliment & Complaint Policy & Procedure

1. Policy Statement

It is the policy of Saint John of God Housing Association to provide safe, secure, suitable, affordable and quality rented accommodation for tenants with specific needs in accordance with their choice, hopes and aspirations.

2. Policy Purpose

Saint John of God Housing Association strives to provide the highest level of service in all of its areas of work and ensure that all tenants are provided with a high standard of accommodation. This policy applies to all tenants of Saint John of God Housing Association and it is the aim of this policy to give guidance on what to do if you wish to forward a comment, a compliment or a complaint to the Housing Association. This will afford the Housing Association the opportunity to respond, monitor and report on the matters raised.

As the Housing Association wants to improve its housing service to its tenants at every opportunity, if there are occasions when you are not happy with the housing service, it is important that you let us know. On the other hand, there may be occasions when you are extremely happy with the service you receive, or you may wish to comment on, or give suggestions about, the housing service you receive. Do please let the Housing Association know by providing feedback, and it will try to improve the housing service.

3. Scope of the Policy

This Policy covers Saint John of God Housing Association clg's tenants, housing applicants and neighbours who have the right to comment, compliment or complain about any housing service delivered by the Housing Association.

4. Who can use this Policy & How to Contact us?

4.1. Who can use this Policy?

Anyone who receives or requests a housing service from the Housing Association can use this Policy. This can include either tenants, people applying for housing and anyone in a neighbouring property.

This Policy can also be used if a person feels that the Housing Association has not complied with its own policy and procedures. The policy is also available to those who act on your behalf; e.g. Solicitor, Advocate, family member, etc. The Housing Association will respond to all correspondence via the complainant and the advocate will have to have consent to act on behalf of the complainant.

4.2. How can you contact us?

- ✘ *In person*, just contact your Housing Officer.
- ✘ *By phone* on 01-468 6452 (Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm). Please leave a message if there is no answer.
- ✘ *In writing* to the Housing Officer at Saint John of God Housing Association CLG, Tessa House, Block D, Springfield, Tallaght, Dublin 24.
- ✘ *By email* to eimear.ohagan@sjog.ie.
- ✘ *Through your advocate* (e.g. Support service, family member, solicitor, councillor or any other person who has the consent of the complainant) by means of any of the above communication methods.

4.3. What the Housing Association will do with your feedback

It is essential that the Housing Association responds appropriately to all feedback received; depending on the type of view expressed, such as:

4.3.1. Comments

The Housing Association is constantly looking for ways to improve its housing service to tenants. If you feel that the housing service could be improved in certain areas, or if you feel that you could contribute a service in a certain area, the Housing Association would be delighted to hear from you. Just contact the Housing Officer and request a Comment, Compliment & Complaint Form ([Appendix 1](#)). Your comments submitted on this form will be acknowledged within 5 to 10 working days. Within a further 5 working days, the Housing Association will follow up to advise you if it can carry out your comment(s) or suggestion(s).

4.3.2. Compliment

The Housing Association is always delighted to know if it has got some things right in order to replicate these initiatives throughout our service. Again, just contact the Housing Officer and request a Comment, Compliment & Complaint Form ([Appendix 1](#)). The Housing Association will acknowledge your feedback in writing and it will make sure that your compliment gets to the right person within 5 to 10 working days.

4.3.3. Complaint

The Housing Association defines a complaint as follows:

'Any verbal or written expression of dissatisfaction by any person, however made, about the housing service, actions or inactions of a body or its officers which require a response.'

Should you wish to make a complaint, please contact your support worker or programme manager in the first instance to ascertain whether your complaint relates to your tenancy.

If the complaint is tenancy related, please contact the Housing Officer. It is important for you to let the Housing Association know exactly what the problem is and how you would like it resolved.

We believe that most tenancy issues can be resolved informally once we are made aware and would ask that you allow us the opportunity to respond before using a formal procedure. If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the informal response, then of course you are welcome to use the formal procedure as set out below.

There are a number of specific circumstances which are excluded from this Policy & Procedure, and they include:

- a a complaint about a service where the Housing Association has no responsibility, e.g. a support-related issue;
- b a complaint that is being dealt with, or was previously dealt with, by legal proceedings, or where a decision will be decided by a court, e.g. an eviction order;
- c a complaint that has not been raised within twelve months of the incident occurring;
- d a complaint about a decision where a statutory appeal body (e.g. The Residential Tenancies Board) or tribunal has been established to examine the case; or,
- e compensation claims for damage to property or personal injury. These are liability claims and they must be dealt with by our insurers, (or the relevant contractor's insurance, if appropriate);

Please note: the Housing Association does not insure your personal contents; therefore this policy does not cover any damage to your personal items.

- f anonymous complaints, unless deemed necessary by the Housing Association;
- g a complaint that comes under another policy, e.g. the Letting Policy or the Anti-social Behaviour Policy, as you may be directed to the other policy to ensure that the process has been completed before a complaint can be heard; or,

h a complaint that has already been considered and has not been escalated by the complainant within 20 working days (unless there is new information), i.e. as per the procedure below.

If your complaint does not fall into any of the above categories, please contact the Housing Officer and request a Comment, Compliment & Complaint Form and our formal complaints procedure will then commence.

It is worth highlighting that at this stage you will be asked if you have attempted to either resolve the issue yourself, with the support of your advocate or support worker/programme manager or informally with the Housing Association where appropriate.

Stage 1

Your complaint may well be resolved on the day it is received by the Housing Association. However, it usually takes some time to look into it. If so, a written acknowledgement will be issued within 5 working days and a written response will be issued within a further 5 to 10 working days.

Initially, a complaint is dealt with by the Housing Officer, unless the complaint directly involves the Housing Officer. In that case, please proceed to stage 2 of the process.

The Housing Association aims to resolve complaints within 10 working days, however, sometimes it may need more time. In this event, the Housing Association will contact you in writing and agree a response date to resolve the matter within 20 working days. In any event, the Housing Association will keep you updated during the process.

Stage 2

If you are not happy with the Housing Association's response from **Stage 1**, you may write to the Planning & Development Manager within 20 days of **Stage 1's** response date. State why you are dissatisfied with the outcome of **Stage 1's** investigation. State what you would like the Housing Association to do. Ask for a more senior member of the Housing Association to investigate the matter, which in most cases, will fall to the Planning & Development Manager. The senior manager, i.e. the Planning & Development Manager, then has 10 working days to acknowledge your letter and a further 10 working days to respond to your complaint.

Stage 3

If you are not satisfied with the Planning & Development Manager's response, send your letter into the Housing Association within 20 days of receiving the letter from the Planning & Development Manager. State why you are not happy with the response and/or possible outcomes, and state that you would like the Chief Executive Officer to investigate the matter.

In this event, the Chief Executive Officer will acknowledge your letter within 10 working days and will have a further 10 working days to respond to you. The Chief Executive Officer's response will be final.

Stage 4

If you are still not satisfied that your complaint has been adequately dealt with, you may at this stage address your complaint to the Residential Tenancies Board. The RTB investigates disputes between the Landlord and tenants through the avenues outlined below:

- ✘ *By Phone on 0818-30-30-37;*
- ✘ *Through the Residential Tenancies Board 's website on www.rtb.ie*
- ✘ *By email at disputes@rtb.ie*
- ✘ *In writing addressed to: Residential Tenancies Board, PO Box 47, Clonakilty, Co. Cork*

Note: There is no public office for the RTB. Therefore the methods of communication listed above are the only options available to you if you wish to make contact with the RTB.

5. What are the possible outcomes of a complaint?

Some remedial actions in response to a complaint may include:

- ✘ Mediation
- ✘ An apology
- ✘ An explanation
- ✘ Correcting the error
- ✘ Carrying out a housing service improvement
- ✘ A change in policy or procedure

Please note: The above list is by way of example only.

6. Who will know about my complaint?

As far as possible, the Housing Association will respect the confidentiality of your complaint. During the investigation of your complaint, your name will not be divulged unless it is necessary. You will appreciate however, that if your complaint involves another tenant or a member of staff, it may be difficult to investigate the complaint without talking to the person involved. If you decline to give us permission, it may not be possible for us to resolve the problem.

Therefore, due to their very nature, anonymous complaints cannot be acknowledged or investigated. However a record will be kept for future reference as all complaints are recorded, monitored and reviewed confidentially. In addition, complaints are reported to statutory bodies in relation to performance standards (details of the nature of any complaint(s) are treated confidentially and are not disclosed to the statutory body.

At any stage, a complaint can be withdrawn and the person investigating the complaint may cease to investigate, or review, the complaint. However, where the person investigating the complaint has reasonable grounds for believing that public interest would be best served by continuing the investigation, a report has to be submitted to the Chief Executive Officer in order for approval to proceed or to cease, (e.g. Safeguarding/Protected Disclosures, etc.).

As per legislation, a complaint cannot be made unless it is reported within 12 months of the date of the action which gave rise to the complaint. However, should the Housing Association receives a complaint outside of the 12-month limit; it will be at the discretion of the Housing Association whether to proceed to investigate the complaint.

7. Always Get Independent Advice

Before making a complaint, you may wish to seek independent advice and the Housing Association would recommend that you do so to assist you in making your decision.

We would always hope the problem is rectified before you actually make a complaint and we would always advise you to discuss any complaints with your support worker, programme manager and/or advocate, which in turn may resolve the issue.

Below is a list of the mainly free Advice Services available:

- ✘ Residential Tenancies Board – www.rtb.ie (Free)
- ✘ Threshold – www.threshold.ie (Free)
- ✘ Citizens Information – www.citizensinformation.ie (Free)
- ✘ Legal Aid Board – www.legalaidboard.ie (Free)
- ✘ Independent Solicitor (Not Free)

Please note: This list is for example purposes only.


8. Checklist for Comment, Compliment & Complaint Policy

		TICK ✓
Who Can use this Policy & How to Contact Us:		
1.	Anyone who receives a tenancy or licence agreement from Saint John of God Housing Association Limited can use this policy.	
2.	Firstly, speak to your support worker or programme manager – they will ensure that your comment, compliment or complaint will be directed to the right service.	
3.	How to Contact Us – By phone, in person, in writing, by email, or through your advocate/next of kin.	
What we do with your feedback:		
Comment:		
1.	Complete the Comment section in the form and send it into us via your support worker or programme manager – The Housing Association will acknowledge the comment within 5 working days and let you know within a further 5 working days whether your comment or suggestion will be actioned.	
Compliment:		
1.	Complete the Compliment section in the form and send it into us via your support worker or programme manager - The Housing Association will acknowledge your compliment by letter within 5 -10 working days, making sure that your compliment goes to the right person.	
Complaint:		
1.	Complete the Complaint section in the form and send it into us via your support worker or programme manager - The Housing Association will acknowledge your complaint in writing within 5 working days, should it fall within the Complaint Policy.	
2.	Stage 1 – Your complaint will be acknowledged within 5 working days and investigated by the Housing Officer. A written response will be issued within a further 5 -10 working days. If more time is needed, the Housing Officer will write to you to inform you so.	
3.	Stage 2 – If you are not happy with the outcome, contact the Housing Officer within 20 working days of receiving the written response, (i.e. Stage 1). Send a response in writing stating why you are dissatisfied and what outcome you would like. Senior Management will have 10 working days to acknowledge your letter and a further 10 days to respond. Should Senior Management need further time to respond or investigate the matter, you will be informed in writing.	
4.	Stage 3 – If you are not happy with the outcome, contact the person in senior management within 20 working days of receiving a written response. Send a response in writing stating why you are dissatisfied and what outcome you would like. Your complaint will then be passed to the CEO and will be acknowledged within 10 working days. A response will issue within a further 10 working days. Should the CEO need further time to investigate, you will be informed in writing.	
5.	Stage 4 – If your complaint is in relation to your tenancy, and if you are not happy with the outcome of the CEO's investigation, you are entitled to lodge your complaint with the Residential Tenancies Board (RTB).	
<p><i>Saint John of God Housing Association CLG</i> <i>Gleann na hEorna, Tessa House, Block D, Tallaght, Dublin 24</i> <i>Tel: 01-468 6452 Email: eimear.ohagan@sjog.ie</i></p>		

Appendices

Appendix 1

Comment, Compliment & Complaint Form

		SAINT JOHN OF GOD HOUSING ASSOCIATION CLG		
		COMMENT, COMPLIMENT & COMPLAINT FORM		
Name:				
Address:				
Telephone Number:				
Mobile Number:				
Email:				
Please let us know what you are contacting us about? <i>(Please tick)</i>		Comment	Compliment	Complaint
Are you acting on behalf of anyone as an advocate?		Yes	No	
What would you like to tell us? <i>(Use a separate sheet if necessary)</i>				
If you are not happy with the service you received from us, what do you think we should do to put things right? <i>(Again use a separate sheet if necessary)</i>				
Please complete this form, sign it and return it to the address below. Thank you for your feedback.				
I confirm that everything stated in this form is correct to the best of my knowledge.				
Signature:				
Date:				
Please return completed form to: Saint John of God Housing Association CLG, Tessa House, Block D, Springfield, Tallaght, Dublin 24 Tel: 01-468 6452 Web:www.sjog.ie				

Appendix 2

Legislation & Guiding Documents

- ✘ *Housing Act, 1966*
- ✘ *Housing Act, 1988*
- ✘ *Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 1992*
- ✘ *Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 1997*
- ✘ *Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 2002*
- ✘ *Residential Tenancies Act, 2004*
- ✘ *Health Act, 2004*
- ✘ *Criminal Justice Act, 2006*
- ✘ *Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 2009*
- ✘ *Housing (Amendment) Act, 2013*
- ✘ *Residential Tenancies (Amendment) Act, 2015*
- ✘ *National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability (2011 – 2016)*
- ✘ *European Convention on Human Rights*
- ✘ *The Ombudsman's Guide to Internal Complaint Systems*

Appendix 3 - Glossary of Terms

Saint John of God Housing Association CLG	To be referred to in this document as The Housing Association
Service Provider	To be referred to in this document as the body that provides care or support, for example, Saint John of God Community Services CLG or another service provider.
Approved Housing Body (i.e. AHB)	Saint John of God Housing Association CLG is an AHB approved by the DoHPCLG, under Section 6 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 1992, which enables housing authorities to provide assistance to AHBs for the provision of housing. Section 6 (6) of the Act empowers the Minister to grant approved status for this purpose.
Residential Tenancies Board (i.e. RTB)	The RTB holds a register of all private and social housing tenancies within Ireland It offers a dispute resolution service and it conducts research of the housing sector.
Local Authority (i.e. LA)	The governing body in each area, normally per county.

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